



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

SAN DIEGO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CHILD SEX TOURISM AND PRODUCTION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

LOS ANGELES – A retired auditor is facing 17 years in prison after pleading guilty here in U.S. District Court to charges that he traveled to the Philippines to have sex with disadvantaged teenage boys, whom prosecutors say he paid with food, clothing, and money.

Edilberto Datan, 61, actually entered his plea March 1, but federal authorities did not learn until today that a judicial order precluding an announcement of that action had been lifted. As part of his plea, Datan has agreed to serve a 17-year prison sentence, and will be required to remain under court supervision for the rest of his life once he is released. At the court session earlier this month, Datan admitted to engaging in illicit sexual conduct with minors and producing child pornography outside the United States. In his plea, he acknowledged having sex with eight Filipino boys, 14 to 15 years of age.

Datan, a naturalized Filipino, was arrested late last year by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) after returning from a trip to his native country.

ICE opened an investigation into the former California Department of Real Estate auditor after his name surfaced in an international investigation into a Belarus-based company called Regpay that provided billing services to subscribers of child pornography websites.

In November 2004, Datan was intercepted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers at LAX as he returned from a trip to Cebu Island in the Philippines. CBP inspectors contacted ICE agents after finding four computer memory sticks in Datan's luggage and a digital camera. A review of the material on those memory sticks showed they contained more than 200 sexually explicit images of teenage Filipino boys. Datan told ICE agents the boys were part of a Filipino dance troupe he knew through friends. He said he often attended the boys' performances and stayed at a nearby hostel. The day following Datan's arrest, ICE agents searched his San Diego home where they seized a large collection of child pornography.

“Some pedophiles mistakenly believe they can escape detection and prosecution by committing child sex crimes overseas,” said Michael Unzueta, special agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in San Diego. “We’re putting those who prey on children on notice that ICE will use all of its law enforcement authorities to combat this heinous behavior both here and abroad.”

Datan is the second person to be found guilty of child sex tourism charges in the Central District of California under the provisions of the PROTECT Act. The first, John W. Seljan, was convicted in November and is scheduled to be sentenced March 28.

The PROTECT Act substantially strengthened federal laws against predatory crimes involving children outside the United States by modifying the burden of proof requirements for federal prosecutors to bring charges.

The cooperation of the Philippine National Police and the Philippine Department of Justice was instrumental in this prosecution. Officials say more and more foreign governments are showing a willingness to assist in these types of cases.

Datan’s arrest is part of Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE enforcement initiative launched last year to identify, investigate, arrest and, in the case of foreign nationals, deport child sex predators. Since the initiative began in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 5,000 individuals nationwide, including more than 1,200 in California.

ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators. Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.